

# TEN WAYS

TO A MORE TOLERANT ALASKA THAT CELEBRATES  
OUR DIVERSITY OF PEOPLE AND CULTURES



A COMMUNITY ACTION GUIDE  
Governor's Commission on Tolerance  
2001



# SOMEWHERE IN ALASKA...

## EVERY DAY

FIFTEEN ALASKANS REQUEST ASSISTANCE  
FROM THE ALASKA COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

## EVERY WEEK

228 VIOLENT CRIMES ARE REPORTED IN ALASKA. OF THOSE, HALF ARE CASES OF  
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE -- VIOLENCE AGAINST LOVED ONES AND FAMILY MEMBERS.

## THIS YEAR

GOVERNOR TONY KNOWLES CREATES A TOLERANCE COMMISSION. ANCHORAGE MAYOR  
GEORGE WUERCH FORMS A KITCHEN CABINET AGAINST RACISM. THE U.S. COMMISSION ON  
CIVIL RIGHTS HOLDS HEARINGS IN ALASKA. THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENES AN  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND XENOPHOBIA.  
THE UNITED STATES IS ATTACKED BY TERRORISTS.

Discrimination, violence, harassment and indifference are a daily constant in Alaska. The paint-ball incident of January 14, 2001, when three white males videotaped themselves "going hunting" for Eskimos in downtown Anchorage, was an eruption of Alaska's increasing intolerance. Bias is a human condition. History, including Alaska's history, is rife with prejudice against groups and individuals because of their race, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, economic status, age or other differences. As is common in other states across the country, discrimination is most obvious against the largest minority population.

Alaskans are proud of their diverse cultures. In the 2000 census, Alaska was one of the most ethnically-diverse states, because residents self-identified with a mix of ethnic heritages. Of the 626,932 Alaskans enumerated in the 2000 census, 69.3 percent are white, 15.6 percent are Alaska Native, 4.1 percent are Hispanic or Latino, 3.5 percent are African American, 4 percent are Asian and 5.4 percent of us identify ourselves as mixed. Missing from the census data is an accounting of the gay and lesbian community, which many estimate at about 10 percent.

As Alaskans, we cherish our freedoms and civil rights. The first act of the Territorial Legislature in 1913 was to give women the right to vote -- seven years before the rest of the nation. We are proud of landmark civil rights legislation championed by Elizabeth Peratrovich and the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood in 1945, two decades before the U.S. Civil Rights Act. Black activist Willard L. Bowman championed legislation creating Alaska's Human Rights Commission, served as its first director in 1963, and later became the first elected black legislator in 1970. Our country's first Filipino American female legislator, Thelma Buchholdt, was elected to the Alaska Legislature in 1974, where she helped to advance rights for minorities, women and seniors.

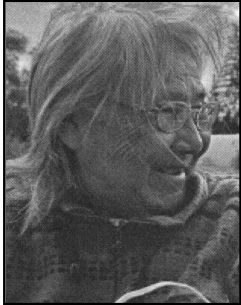
Unfortunately, Alaskans' passion for equality and freedom has been overshadowed by a series of serious incidents of prejudice. Headlines tell the story of hate and violence. There are unsolved murders of Alaska Native women in Anchorage; frequent reports of women abused by domestic partners; children neglected by parents; daily harassment of people based on their economic status and sexual orientation; conflict between urban and rural Alaskans; and, since the tragedy of the September 11 terrorist acts, hate crimes against those perceived to be Muslim or of Middle-Eastern descent.

## THE GOOD NEWS IS ...

All over Alaska people are fighting discrimination. The Governor's Tolerance Commission listened to nearly 100 hours of testimony from Kotzebue to Kodiak, Juneau to Bethel and Fairbanks to Anchorage. Alaskans all across the state are standing up for themselves and others, promoting unity and inclusion. More often than not, when hate flares up, good erupts, too. This guide sets out 10 principles for promoting tolerance and fighting hate. Some of the principles are illustrated in the stories of real Alaskans, and some are national examples from Southern Poverty Law Center's "10 Ways to Fight Hate." At the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights hearings in Alaska this summer, Commissioner Cruz Reynoso, a justice and longtime civil rights activist from California, commented that Alaska's small population and amazing diversity give us the "opportunity" to do things right. It's not too late. Our experience shows that one person, acting from conscience and passion, can neutralize bigotry. Laws are needed to discourage discrimination, and education is critical to fight hate.

# TEN

## TO A MORE TOLERANT ALASKA THAT CELEBRATES



# 1

### ACT

Do something. Gov. Tony Knowles appointed a 14-member Tolerance Commission to travel the state and solicit ideas and suggestions from Alaskans. Together, we need to act on the suggestions detailed in this action guide and accompanying report.



# 2

### UNITE

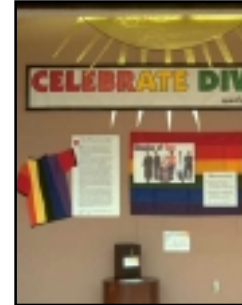
Call a friend or co-worker. Organize a group of allies from schools, churches, clubs and other civic sources. Create a diverse coalition. Include children, police and the media. Gather ideas from everyone, and get everyone involved.



# 3

### SUPPORT THE VICTIMS

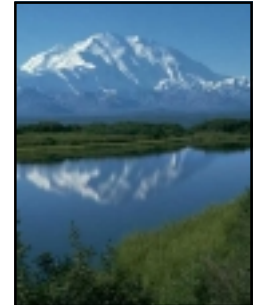
Left unchecked, the everyday incidences of discrimination and harassment can lead to violence. In all cases, victims are left vulnerable and fearful. Do something to help.



# 4

### DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Ignorance about different people, cultures, and lifestyles causes fear. Fear and ignorance cause hate. Whether we're Alaska Natives, lifelong Alaskans, immigrants, homesteaders or those who arrived here yesterday, we all could benefit from knowing more about Alaskans.



# 5

### JUST DO IT!

There are two verses of the Alaska Flag Song. Sing them both! Denali is the Alaska name for our mountain. Call it Denali! And what about a contest for a new state seal? Celebrate what we have in common as Alaskans.

A special report of the Governor's Commission on Tolerance, Office of Gov. Tony Knowles, December 6, 2001

Diana Rhoades, Executive Director

Printed in Anchorage to inform Alaskans about tolerance-related issues, at a cost of \$1.39 per copy.

This publication is available at [www.gov.state.ak.us/tolerance](http://www.gov.state.ak.us/tolerance). Contact (907) 269-7450 or TDD (907) 465-3489 for more information.

Audio tapes of the Tolerance Commission testimony can be purchased for \$6 per 120 minute tape. Contact Zena at IMIG Audio/Video at (907) 274-2161

Special thanks to the Southern Poverty Law Center for permission to adapt their 10 Ways to Fight Hate publication.

The Southern Poverty Law Center is a nonprofit legal and educational organization based in Montgomery, Alabama. The original publication was written by Jim Carrier, edited by Richard Cohen and researched by the staff of the Intelligence Project. Design by Rodney Diaz and Russell Estes.



# WAYS

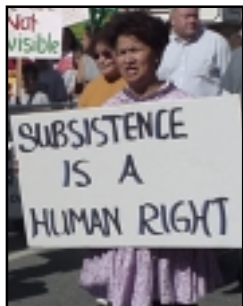
## OUR DIVERSITY OF PEOPLE AND CULTURES



# 6

### SPEAK UP

You, too, have First Amendment rights. Hate must be exposed and denounced. Buy an ad. Hold a unity rally or parade. Get involved.



# 7

### LOBBY LEADERS

Persuade political, business and community leaders to take a stand against hate crimes and other issues that divide us. A quick response creates a positive reputation for the community.



# 8

### LOOK LONG RANGE

Create a "bias response" team. Organize and participate in annual events, such as a parade or culture fair, that celebrate your community's diversity and harmony. Build or promote something the community needs.



# 9

### TEACH TOLERANCE

Bias is learned early, usually at home. But children, parents and educators can be influenced by school and community programs and curricula. Spend time with and mentor local youth.



# 10

### DIG DEEPER

Look into issues that divide us: economic and educational inequality, institutional discrimination, and equal justice for all.

## RESOURCES BEGIN ON PAGE 26

A COMPILATION OF ORGANIZATIONS AND MATERIALS THAT CAN ASSIST YOU IN FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION IN ALASKA

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS PAGE 28

**ACT**

**DO SOMETHING. GOV. TONY KNOWLES APPOINTED A TOLERANCE COMMISSION TO GET PEOPLE TALKING. CITIZENS ACROSS ALASKA WROTE OPINION PIECES AND TESTIFIED AT HEARINGS. DISCUSSION LEADS TO ACTION.**

IF YOU'VE OPENED THIS GUIDE, you probably want to do something about intolerance and hate. You are not alone. Hundreds of individuals representing thousands of Alaskans testified to the Tolerance Commission, and many, many more have used other forums to urge you to DO SOMETHING. Take action.

■ Hate is an open attack on tolerance and decency. It must be countered with acts of goodness. Sitting home with your virtue does no good.

■ Hate is an attack on a community's health. It tears society along ethnic, gender and religious lines, and ignites emotions that need to be channeled.

■ Hate events are rarely isolated. They are a symptom of tension in the community. Take them seriously--even name calling.

**PAINT-BALL ATTACKS**

*"The news of the paint-ball attack in Anchorage has angered and saddened many, if not the majority of Alaskans... our senses, our hopes and our dreams. ... In my heart I know that Alaska's Silent Majority truly detests the few haters amongst us. But the greatest risk to our society is that if our Silent Majority chooses to remain silent about the people and/or groups who harbor and*

*exhibit feelings of hatred, and feel at liberty to perform hate attacks, then we all lose."* -- *Anchorage Daily News Compass Piece Published March 14, 2001, by Major General Jake Lestenkof, the former adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard.*

**SEPTEMBER 11 TERRORIST ATTACKS**

*"The Aleut name for our state is sometimes translated "Great Land" but it is also accurately translated as "the place that is not an island." ... For most of our history we have been treated or have acted like an island, remote from the mainstream of the world or national life and pretending that the intricate affairs beyond our borders do not affect us... On September 11, 2001, everything changed. The deadly course of airplanes in New York stopped air traffic across Alaska and nearly had us down a Korean jet liner. The dust settling in Manhattan caused an evacuation of downtown Anchorage, which was later aborted. We, like the United States generally, can no longer act as an island. We are connected with the world, for better or for worse. We have lost our innocence. We have lost our splendid isolation."* -- *Anchorage Daily News letter to the editor, by State Representative Eric Croft, published September 14, 2001*





## THANKS FOR YOUR SUGGESTIONS!

### GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON TOLERANCE

Following the January 2001 paint-ball attacks on Alaska Natives in Anchorage, Gov. Knowles convened a cabinet-level task force to look at discrimination in Alaska. One of the recommendations was to create a commission, made up of a diverse group of Alaskans, to hold hearings and solicit ideas and suggestions for change. The volunteer Commission held eleven public hearings statewide, in Kotzebue, Juneau, Kodiak, Kenai, Fairbanks, Bethel, and several in Anchorage, and sorted through hundreds of emails, calls and letters. Some of the comments are included in this publication and in the body of the report, which is accessible online at <http://www.gov.state.ak.us/tolerance/>.

Reverend Chuck Eddy of Anchorage, Chair - Recently retired rector of St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Rev. Eddy served on the municipality's Social Services Task Force and the Anchorage Council on Alcoholism.

Kelly Brown of Fairbanks - Business Agent for the Alaska State Employees Association, Brown helped organize a local "Not in our Town" campaign against hate, violence and intolerance.

Thelma Buchholdt of Anchorage - The first Filipino American woman elected to a State House in the U.S., Buchholdt, an attorney, served eight years in the Alaska Legislature, founded the Asian Alaskan Cultural Center, and now directs the state Office of Equal Employment Opportunity.

Senator Bettye Davis of Anchorage - The first black woman elected to public office, Davis is now in the State Senate after six years in the House and many years on the School Board. She is president of the National Caucus of Black School Board Members.

Marie Greene of Kotzebue - Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of the NANA Regional Corporation, Greene, an Inupiaq, is former chair of the Kotzebue IRA Council and was a delegate to the Inuit Circumpolar Conference.

Rep. Mary Kapsner of Bethel - A Yupik leader representing the Kuskokwim and Bristol Bay regions in the Alaska Legislature, which includes two communities and 28 villages, Kapsner previously was the youth representative to the National Congress of American Indians.

Mara Kimmel of Anchorage - Now the Supervising Attorney for the Immigration and Refugee Services Program of Catholic Social Services, Kimmel previously focused on a range of social justice issues including working with Alaska Native communities on subsistence issues.

Shari Kochman of Juneau - Kochman is board secretary for the Juneau Jewish Community, is active in local arts groups and school mentor programs and serves as Deputy Legislative Director for Governor Knowles.

Senator Georgianna Lincoln of Rampart - An Athabaskan leader first elected to the House in 1990 and now in her third term in the Senate, Lincoln represents the largest state Senate district in the United States, and is an outspoken advocate of all human rights issues.

Denise Morris of Anchorage - The President and CEO of the Alaska Native Justice Center, Morris is of Aleut descent. She is an active member of numerous groups that work on issues of equality, social justice, and victims' rights.

Father Michael Oleksa of Koliganek - An ordained Orthodox priest, Father Oleksa has spent most of his life working throughout rural Alaska. He is a well-known teacher and speaker on cross-cultural communications.

Gilbert Sanchez of Anchorage - Born in Cuba, Sanchez has over two decades of experience as a broadcast journalist and has won awards for his coverage of unsolved homicides of Alaska Native women in Anchorage.

Tom Stewart of Juneau - A retired Superior Court judge, Stewart has a lifetime of service to the State of Alaska, including work as secretary to the Alaska Constitutional Convention in 1955 and 1956.

Lt. Gov. Fran Ulmer - Now serving her second term as Lt. Governor, Ulmer is the first woman to hold statewide office in Alaska. She served eight years in the State House of Representatives and is the former Mayor of Juneau. She is an ex-officio member of the Commission.



*Commissioners listen during the final public hearing at the Alaska Federation of Natives Elders and Youth Conference, October 23, 2001.*

## 4TH ANNUAL WE THE PEOPLE MARCH

Eighty-five-year-old Athabaskan grandmother Katie John knows how to take action. On August 22 in downtown Anchorage, Katie rallied several thousand Alaskans to join her to convince Gov. Knowles not to appeal a 10-year-old federal/state legal battle in her name. The expensive, divisive battle centered around a narrow statutory definition of "public land" in federal law. Gov. Knowles chose not to appeal the decision and the U.S. Supreme Court has decided not to accept further appeals on this case. According to polls, Katie joins a majority of Alaskans in supporting further action on subsistence rights. Many Alaska Natives believe subsistence is a spiritual need -- one that ties them to the land they have survived on for more than 10,000 years. Gov. Knowles, the Alaska Chamber of Commerce, Commonwealth North, tribal leaders and many others believe resolving subsistence will go a long way toward resolving the growing rural/urban divide in Alaska.

## UNITE

CALL A FRIEND OR CO-WORKER. ORGANIZE A GROUP OF ALLIES FROM SCHOOLS, CHURCHES, CLUBS AND OTHER CIVIC SOURCES. CREATE A DIVERSE COALITION. INCLUDE CHILDREN, POLICE AND THE MEDIA. GATHER IDEAS FROM EVERYONE, AND GET EVERYONE INVOLVED.

YOUR INSTINCT FOR TOLERANCE is shared by others. But as the Tolerance Commission quickly found out after its first public hearing in the Mountain View neighborhood of Anchorage, even the word tolerance is difficult to embrace. Webster's defines tolerance as "freedom from bigotry and prejudice," and to tolerate is "to recognize and respect others' beliefs, practices, etc. without sharing them." Alaskans from across the state called and wrote with their suggestions for a better name. Diversity. Brotherhood. Sisterhood. Unity. Mixed salad. A self-described 78-year-old lady from Juneau screamed into the answering machine that she "didn't want to be tolerated." Don Roberts, Jr. suggested we should be more like a "quilt," where each piece is separate, distinct, yet connected, and contributing to the purpose of the whole. Nels Lawson of Sitka says we should move toward acceptance, respecting and valuing the richness of diversity.

## HOW TOLERANT SHOULD WE BE?

*"The greatest impact generated from the work of the Commission on Tolerance is to instigate discussion among community members about an accepted level of tolerance for diversity that should exist. We all need to think about and discuss this issue...How tolerant should we be about intolerance? What would it take to become a more tolerant community and what are the risks? If we truly hear one another, will we be forced to understand, to show mercy, to get involved in one another's lives? If we choose to allow intolerance of diversity -- will we then celebrate exclusivity to a greater extent than already happens? If so, will that mean that intolerance is displayed in less subtle ways between different socioeconomic levels of our community, ethnic groups, cultural communities? Will we become so intolerant that individual clans live inside walled neighborhoods and openly war with one another? How many of us could tolerate living in such a community...?"*

-- Karleen Jackson, Ph.D., executive director of Catholic Social Services. She testified at the July 18 Commission hearing.

## TOLERATE EACH OTHER

*"...When our bodies die and we leave this earth, we will not be black, white, red or yellow but will be a spirit who knows no color, and it may not even be a sex or age.*

*"If we tolerate other people, just maybe they will tolerate us."*

-- ADN letter to editor from Gayle Cleary of Anchorage



**BRIDGE BUILDERS** brings people of different cultures together in a social setting. The goal is to unite people of unique cultural and racial backgrounds to improve racial harmony and communications within Anchorage's community. Members are shown here at the Fur Rondy Parade in Anchorage.

ALASKA 20/20:  
ALASKANS CHARTING OUR FUTURE

Byron Mallott, of the First Alaskans Foundation, testified at the Tolerance Commission hearing in Juneau on July 26. A summary of his testimony follows. It discusses, in part, a multi-year effort to develop a course for Alaska in the coming 20 years. The Alaska Humanities Forum 20/20 Conference brings Alaskans together to define a common vision for the state, to set goals, to identify actions to take, and to measure our progress over time. Alaska 20/20 is a call to action for Alaska citizens to take responsibility for our communities, our regions and our State.



*"The Alaska Humanities Forum (AHF) is critical to helping us bridge the rural/urban divide. Alaska is really a third-world nation in many, many ways. We don't spend enough time thinking about this. Some of our population can do anything and everything. A significant portion of*

*our population has difficulty accessing basic services. Issues of tolerance and racism and hate come from the lack of power. The First Alaskans Foundation is working with the AHF 20/20 Program to develop a scientific survey to put on the table before all of us as Alaskans -- who we are -- what*





are our biases, what are our fears, what are our hopes. I know it can be done because it is done routinely across the nation. I'm a bit apprehensive because I'm afraid of what we'll see. But I know we need to see it.

"...The First Alaskans Foundation also supports the Bridge Builders efforts. I had an opportunity to view an album of photos from this summer's 500-member event at the Alaska Native Heritage Center. The issues they are addressing and that the Tolerance Commission are addressing seem to arrive at a particular time in our history that we must grasp.

"We can't take tolerance and understanding and dialogue, and coming together as people for granted. We have to keep working at it. I have been talking about the creation of an institution -- the Aurora Conference. I think we need a non-governmental organization. It has to come from the people. Faith groups, civic groups, ethnic groups, civil rights institutions. We must have economic institutions involved. Bring the BPs, ARCOs, NANA's, small businesses, etc. We all must engage the economic aspect. There seems to be so much bubbling up from local areas that are trying to address the issues that you are addressing. I'm hopeful."

**Testimony of Byron Mallott, July 26, Juneau**



**Republican former State Senator Arliss Sturgulewski joined Democrat former Representative Katie Hurley as Grand Marshalls of the Gay Pride Parade in downtown Anchorage in June. Thousands of Alaskans watched the parade.**

## TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS

Gay and lesbian-bashing is a pervasive, severe, and unaddressed form of prejudice in Alaska, and hurts vulnerable members of all ethnic, religious and economic groups in our society, whether rural or urban. Here are some excellent resources:

1.) "How To Stop Hallway Harassment In 3 Minutes - A Guide for Teachers and Students." This is available at [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org). 2.) "Mentoring Sexual Minority Youth" and 3.) "Teens Working" from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, [www.nwrel.org](http://www.nwrel.org).

## CAMPAIGN FOR UNITY

"One of the reasons we started AMIPA the Alaska Moving Image Preservation Association was our belief in the importance of Alaskan voices and images housed on film, video and audio to our state's history. The strongest use we see for the collections we are trying to save is in our schools. We know that every five years there is a 50% turnover in the population of the state. That means half of our citizens have been here less than five years. For them Alaska's history began the day they landed here.

"Why is history important to issues such as intolerance? History is the foundation upon which we understand who we were, who we are, and who we want to be. It is here we set the standards and establish the criteria for what it means to be an Alaskan. Today the diversity of Alaska is a strength and weakness. The strength is that diversity, the result of our welcome to immigrants from all over the world, reminds us of the democratic values of freedom, equality and justice that this country takes great pride in. The downside of diversity is that our population represents so many cultural values that were born in other states and countries, that we really don't know who we are. To be fair, people bring their intolerance and ignorance with them along with good cultural values that we can all embrace.

"The only way to fight ignorance and intolerance is through education. We have adult ignorance and we have children to be educated. History curriculum in the schools must be designed to target children who are just entering first grade and continue through to high school. History is not just about historical facts, it is also about cultural values. We have an exciting opportunity to do something important but it will take total commitment on the part of schools and the resources from government agencies, the legislature and foundations, to accomplish these very important educational goals. For the adult population it is a political media campaign that will reinforce what our children are learning. It will take the same kind of resources that every social issue and political campaign does, lots of real money and lots of contributions from business and the private sector to see this through.

"...I would like to see political consultants and advertisers who understand the business of campaigns, along with educators, spiritual leaders and other important sectors of our community who will commit to this huge effort, to get together to discuss ways in which this could happen. As a producer I know the power of the media when you have the resources and a good plan to change people's attitudes. It is done every day in business and politics.

"...Needless to say, I view AMIPA's role in all this as a wonderful resource of Alaska's pioneers, Native elders, heroes and heroines, just plain folks and important cultural and historical events for use in the History curriculum for K through 12 and PSA's, documentaries, and public forums for adults. If we can work together, we will truly be able to celebrate pride in our history, ourselves and our cultural diversity.

**Francine Lastufka Taylor, Executive Director, AMIPA**

## SUPPORT THE VICTIMS

**LEFT UNCHECKED, THE EVERYDAY INCIDENCES OF DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT CAN LEAD TO VIOLENCE. IN ALL CASES, VICTIMS ARE LEFT VULNERABLE AND FEARFUL. DO SOMETHING TO HELP.**

### A HATE CRIME ISN'T JUST MISCHIEF

The Tolerance Commission heard from many Alaskans about the hate they had experienced. The paint-balls drew blood and fear, yet some people still say the shooters "are just kids." The letters KKK were scrawled at the workplaces of several black workers. Racial slurs are commonly thrown at people of color. When confronted, the accused have said their actions meant nothing, that it was just a "joke." A swastika was spray-painted on a car in Juneau following the September 11 terrorist attacks. Young white men with bats rode their bikes in downtown Anchorage this summer, looking for homeless people. The Anchorage chapter of the hate group, National Alliance, distributed hate literature to Anchorage homes at least three times this year. These are not jokes. Because hate criminals target members of a group, an attack on one is meant as an attack on all, and the terror is felt by others in our state.

Hilary Morgan has learned a lot about hate crimes and discrimination through her work at Anchorage's Homeward Bound, a community integration program to help homeless street alcoholics. She points out the subtle means of oppression, such as in employment or housing, or selling a pack of cigarettes. The shootings of homeless Alaska Natives, the beatings, rapes and murders of women of color -- these are the blatant results of discrimination and intolerance. All victims have one thing in common. Fear.

### UNSOLVED HOMICIDES

Alaska has the highest rate of sexual assault and abuse in the United States. In Anchorage, Alaska Native women represent less than 4 percent of the population, but are victims in more than 50 percent of the reported rapes. Several groups are working to reverse the statistics, including the Alaska Native Justice Center, Standing Together Against Rape, the Alaska Sexual Assault Response Team, the Alaska Native Women's Sexual Assault Committee and coalitions of police and community leaders. The Tolerance Commission endorses the idea of creating a citizen review panel with subpoena power to be able to investigate the action -- or inaction of police. To his credit, Anchorage Police Chief Walt Monegan testified to both the U.S. Commission on

Civil Rights and to the Tolerance Commission. He has been working to hire more officers, reinvigorate the department's cultural training and work more closely with victim rights advocates.

### REMEMBER THE VICTIMS

Victim's rights champion Janice Lienhart, the founder of Alaska's Victims for Justice advocacy group, died Friday, Nov. 30 in her home, a victim of a rare illness. Her legacy will live forever in victim's rights laws.

Anchorage police are asking for your help in solving the following homicides. If you have any information, please contact the Anchorage Police Department at (907) 786-8500. If you wish to remain anonymous, call Crime Stoppers at 561-STOP (561-7867).

Tina Shangin was found in the wooded area at the corner of the Glenn Highway and Bragaw St. on August 6, 2000. She was 49 years old.

Genevieve Tetpon was found on March 22, 2000, along the frontage road leading to Arctic Valley. She was 28 years old.

Annie Mann was found behind a building located at 1924 Post Rd. on August 8, 1999. She was 45 years old.

Vera Hapoff was found near Ship Creek on June 9, 1999. She was 26 years old.

Michelle Foster-Butler was found at the intersection of 10th and Juneau on September 26, 1999. She was 38 years old.



*Cindy Pennington, the Vice-Chair of the Alaska Native Women's Sexual Assault Committee, received the 2001 National Crime Victim Service award from U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft at a ceremony this year.*



## INVESTIGATE VIOLENCE AND DISCRIMINATION AGAINST NATIVE WOMEN

*"I have already gone on record with my personal experience and I don't feel like covering that right now, because I'd like to enjoy the rest of my day. To make a long story short, I'm an Alaska Native woman, I was*



*drinking, and I was bleeding. I was taken to the 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue Correctional Facility and denied medical attention for my wounds, which were substantial. Subsequently, there was no investigation, really, for who was at fault. I believe that if I would have been a man, with blood, in the same situation, I would have been given medical attention. If I had been a*

*woman of any other color, I would have been given medical attention. If I would have been a Native woman, who was not drinking, I would have been given medical attention. My complaint is about discrimination for Native women who have been drinking. I think crimes against these women are not investigated vigorously and this is a human rights violation."*

**-- Susie Silook, Oct. 23, 2001**

Photo of girl above: A young Susie Silook lived in Nome during the mid-1970s and was chosen to portray "Lolly" in Disney's made-for-TV film *Two Against the Arctic*. Tiny photo above: Susie at the Oct. 23 Tolerance Commission hearing in Anchorage. Originally from Gambell, she has spent the last 17 years in Anchorage. An artist, writer, poet, mother and recovering alcoholic, Susie was a victim of a violent crime.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

■ Report every incident. The Minority Police Relations Task Force is a good contact. The Alaska Native Justice Center, Victims for Justice, Standing Together Against Rape, Abused Women Aid In Crisis, the Women's Resource Center and other groups also may be able to help.

■ Encourage your local police and justice officials to keep accurate records on crimes of hate. One person needs to be in charge.

■ Speak to the press. Your story, with a frank discussion of the impact on your family life, can be a powerful motivator to others to speak up. Many Alaskans embraced the "Not In Our Town" campaign to fight intolerance.

## TO THE MEDIA

A newsroom that covers hate and discrimination issues thoroughly and regularly sets an agenda for the community. Though sometimes ugly to view, the venting of intergroup tensions through your stories and letters serves as a release valve. The Tolerance Commission would like to thank the Alaska media for its excellent coverage of this year's discussions on racism and discrimination.

## I AM A WOMAN

I have been a chaste woman  
a wanton woman  
a loving woman  
a cruel woman.

I trace my ancestry to the earth  
and her brown roots are the vessels  
of my heart.

I have staggered past you  
swaggered past you  
walked in beauty past you  
and slid past you in the blood.

Have you seen me there  
in the shadows of the hills  
and in the drop of the morning dew?

My shadow has lashed out  
in rage in rage in rage  
in drunken rage,  
has bent her head in shame  
and tried to disappear  
into the asphalt and rain.

Such an easy feat, invisibility.

I have been a drunken Native  
a royal pain in your face Native  
a hideously violated Native  
an over served at the bar Native  
a slightly tipsy Native

and finally a Native who surrendered.

I have been a recovering Native  
a meeting going Native  
a prayerful Native and  
a high flying  
step climbing  
burning the sage  
desperately  
Native.

A how do you like me now Native.

Acts of sadism upon my drunken body  
my recovering body  
my seen only in the shadows body  
tender and soft body  
frightened and terrified body

are no big deal.

Considering I am  
just another Indian Girl Poem  
a "that's how they are" poem  
a poem of paintballing  
beaten to a pulp

savaged internally

ravaged externally and  
damned eternally -  
a poem  
in need of anger  
management.

I am the media's inebriated Native story,  
a can't solve this crime because alcohol was involved story,  
a won't investigate the not much of a crime against you story.

Men of all colors do what they will  
with my body because they can  
get away with  
not much of a crime  
on not much of a human.

They are invisible  
and invincible  
and walk with no shame

the most intelligent of criminals  
thwarting our fine police force  
our force  
our police  
force.

I am a woman.

Long ago a beautiful man once  
held me in his arms and said:

"Let he who is without sin cast the first stone."

I am that woman.

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## DO YOUR HOMEWORK

IGNORANCE ABOUT DIFFERENT PEOPLE, CULTURES, AND LIFESTYLES CAUSES FEAR. FEAR AND IGNORANCE CAUSE HATE. WHETHER WE'RE TALKING ABOUT ALASKA NATIVES, EARLY PIONEERS, LIFE-LONG ALASKANS, IMMIGRANTS OR THOSE WHO ARRIVED HERE YESTERDAY, WE ALL COULD BENEFIT FROM KNOWING MORE ABOUT ALASKANS.

## SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REQUIRE ALASKA HISTORY IN HIGH SCHOOL

For more than ten thousand years people have made their homes in Alaska. Alaska's people are diverse in history and heritage and in their ways of living, and this is Alaska's great strength -- so says a distinguished group of Alaskans comprising the Alaska History subcommittee of Commonwealth North.

Commonwealth North is a group of Alaskans working to inform its members and all Alaskans on public policy issues. In 1999 the Board of Directors identified the division between urban and rural Alaska as an issue deserving detailed attention. From this grew the *Urban/Rural Unity Study "U. R. US"* [www.commonwealthnorth.org]. The study addressed a variety of topics, among them economic survival and development, access to fish and game (subsistence), and delivery of services such as police protection and education.

Common themes emerged during the study. One was the importance of education as the underpinning of every successful outcome. Another was the almost universal regret that Alaskans are not sufficiently well informed about our state's history.

Legislation now pending in the Alaska Legislature picks up a portion of Commonwealth North's findings to ensure that students would have to study Alaska history to be able to graduate from high school. House Bill 171, sponsored by Rep. Mary Kapsner, D-Bethel, along with a bipartisan group of 28 rural and urban legislators, is poised to pass the House and move on to the Senate for final approval. Understanding our state's history provides the context for Alaskans' origins, what we as Alaskans value about the diversity and richness of our state. It is fundamental to being an informed and effective participant in state and local affairs. Join the Tolerance Commission in support of Commonwealth North's efforts and passage of House Bill 171.



*"What's all the fuss?" was a common comment card at the Loussac library display of "Celebrate Diversity Under the Midnight Sun." The comments show that of the 941 people who expressed an opinion, more than 79% felt the exhibit was appropriate for the library.*

## PFLAG EDUCATES ALASKANS ABOUT THE GAY, LESBIAN AND TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY

*"My husband and I came to Alaska in 1959. We have raised 4 children in Juneau. I was asked to come today and tell you about PFLAG: what we are, what we do, and what has worked for us in our continuing fight against prejudice, stereotyping and harrassment.*

*"PFLAG is a national volunteer organization a quarter of a century old, with over 500 chapters nationwide, representing over 75,000 households. It stands for parents, families and friends of lesbians and gays. PFLAG provides opportunity for dialogue on sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.*

*"We've helped the high school facilitate a student gay-straight alliance. We've helped teens so depressed as to be near suicide find support and acceptance so they can stay in school, face the taunts and attacks, and graduate. We maintain a help line where anyone can call for information or support. We have testified before the Alaska State Legislature on bills which threaten the lives of gay and lesbian persons. Did you know that most people assume there is equal protection under the law, when this is not true for homosexuals?*

*"...Even if you don't believe it's ok to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender, it is never okay to be disrespectful or violent. Everyone deserves to be treated with respect. Taking action against discrimination and violence of any kind helps make our community stronger and safer for everyone."*

Mildred Boesser testimony, July 26, Juneau

## A NOTE FROM TOLERANCE COMMISSION MEMBER FATHER MICHAEL OLEKSA

Father Oleksa wrote this letter to the Governor's office after he was appointed to the Commission, and before the public hearings began.

*"I hope that we will not waste time trying to discern whether or not discrimination occurs. Every minority person in the state suffers from some sort of bias regularly, not just occasionally. The question is what do we do to minimize such unfairness — not debate whether or not it happens. People have always misunderstood and often feared others who are in some way different from themselves, on racial, socioeconomic, religious, sexual or whatever grounds. We should not pretend that somehow, by moving to Alaska, this all too human tendency magically vanishes from among us. If it happens in Albuquerque, it happens in Anchorage!"*

*"...Even fair-minded, well-educated, "politically-correct" people can be inadvertently and unconsciously biased by cultural factors they have never studied or even noticed. School teachers, social workers, government employees, businessmen, all miscommunicate with each other and even more with members of ethnic or racial groups of which they are not members. And when miscommunication occurs in a hierarchical relationship, whoever has less power suffers the consequences.*

*"A child miscommunicates with a parent, teacher or elder and the child pays. An employee miscommunicates with a boss and the employee pays. A student with a professor, a job applicant with the hiring authority, a patient with a doctor, a defendant with the judge -- whoever has less power pays the consequences for the miscommunication. And if that is the story of your life -- and of all the members of your family, cultural group, race, religion, etc. -- it has exactly the same effect on you as deliberate, conscious, mean-spirited discrimination.*

*"Is the bias that exists in Alaska intentional, or is it unconscious? The intentional variety needs to be attacked directly and "outlawed," but the inadvertent can only be avoided with increased intercultural awareness and understanding in an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation."*

## ONLINE LEARNING TOOLS

Alaska Native Curriculum & Teacher Development Project

<http://www.alaskool.org/>

Litsite Alaska

<http://litsite.alaska.edu/uaa>

## PARENTS, GET INVOLVED IN YOUR LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD

The Tolerance Commission heard from many committed parents and educators, including the Fairbanks North Star Borough Board Ethnic Committee. This group represents the ethnic minority communities in Fairbanks and advises the School Board on ways to improve the academic achievements of students of color, and increase the recruitment and retention of teachers of color. Their recommendations include financial incentives to recruit the best teachers, cross cultural training for educators, more parental involvement and summer academies for students.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT BUSH ALASKA

*"Time after time, I've heard folks say that all Natives are rich, or that we spend a fortune giving bush residents "palaces" as schools or housing. Nothing could be further from the truth..."*

*"As a guardian ad litem, I worked closely with schools from Klawock to Bethel and communities in between... It was not unusual for my clients to jump grade levels in math or reading while schooled by qualified teachers in adequately outfitted facilities or when they had access to qualified, certified teachers. At the same time, the children needed and benefited from the support of their family and bush community. Of course it costs more to properly outfit a school in the bush, but we need to identify and provide a quality of education that will be available to all Alaskans. All of us benefit when the quality of education is raised!"*

*-- Betsy Arbelovsky testimony, October 21, Kenai*



ALUTIIQ DANCER

## KODIAK'S AWARD-WINNING ALUTIIQ MUSEUM EDUCATES ALL

*"The Alutiiq Museum is a non-profit organization that seeks to preserve the prehistoric and historic traditions of the Alutiit (plural of Alutiiq) and promote a greater public awareness of their rich cultural legacy. We created several positive programs designed to bring about cultural awareness of the Alutiiq people located on Kodiak Island. These programs include:*

*"(1.) The Alutiiq Word of the Week, which is broadcasted on the radio, the web and in the local Kodiak Daily Newspaper. (2.) Community Archaeology: a collaborative archaeological program between the museum, Kodiak Tribal council, local community members, and the U.S. Coast Guard Base was created over three years ago to bring the community of Kodiak together on a common goal -- the preservation of Alutiiq heritage through archaeological research. (3.) Rural Schools Art Show program: promotes the creation of traditional crafts and teaching of our heritage. This has been very successful over the last four years in promoting traditional crafts in the rural towns on Kodiak..."*

*Sven Haakanson, Jr., testimony, August 1, Kodiak*

**JUST DO IT!**

THERE ARE TWO VERSES OF THE ALASKA FLAG SONG. SING THEM BOTH! DENALI IS THE ALASKA NAME FOR OUR MOUNTAIN. CALL IT DENALI! AND HOW ABOUT A CONTEST FOR A NEW STATE SEAL? CELEBRATE WHAT WE HAVE IN COMMON AS ALASKANS.

**CALL IT DENALI, NOT MCKINLEY**

Many Alaskans may not know that our beloved mountain was officially named in honor of a man who had never been in Alaska. A gold miner on his way out of Alaska learned that a fellow gold-lover from Ohio had become U.S. President, so he recommended the mountain be named after him, in part to irk silver lovers. When McKinley was assassinated in 1901, mapmakers thought the name would be appropriate. Lost in this gold and silver disagreement was the name that Alaskans had called the mountain for centuries -- Denali. The battle in Congress to return the mountain's name to its original Alaska name has been going on ever since. Fairbanks-based Tanana Chiefs Conference, a consortium of 42 tribal governments, has been winning people over, one by one, to call the mountain "Denali," until Congress passes legislation to change the name officially.

What's the hold-up? Alaska Congressman Don Young sponsors legislation every session to change the name to Denali, but an Ohio Congressman sponsors legislation to keep the name McKinley. Recognizing the conflict, the U.S. Board on Geographic

Names opts for no action on returning the name to reflect Alaska's history.

Like all Alaska storytellers, anthropologist Jim Simon loves to recount the legend of Denali. Yako was a powerful holy man who lived alone in the area that is now north of Denali. He learned that a war chief to the west of the mouth of the Yukon River, on the coast of the Bering Sea, had many beautiful young women in his village. Yako built a magic canoe and went there to find a wife. As he paddled away with his new wife, Tsukala, in his canoe, the war chief chased them. Powers were used in the ensuing battle to turn ocean waves into mountains of stone, creating Denali and all the other peaks. Yako survived and he and his wife went on to have children, the descendants being the Athabascan people.

The word Denali is derived from the Koyukon Athabascan word Deenaalee. There are many spellings and translations of the word in Athabascan language history. Six spellings translate as "The High One" and three mean "Big Mountain." In 1980, the park around the mountain was renamed Denali National Park and Preserve. The Tolerance Commission joins other Alaskans in recommending the mountain and the park be called Denali.



The Alaska Flag Song and the Alaska State Seal are symbols of Alaska's people and government. Alaska Natives are not recognized in our two state symbols. The Tolerance Commission heard significant evidence to support two recommendations: (1.) Officially recognize and sing both verses of the Alaska Flag Song, and (2.) Sponsor a contest, much like the one creating the Alaska Flag, to develop a new State Seal.

### ALASKA'S FLAG AND SONG HISTORY

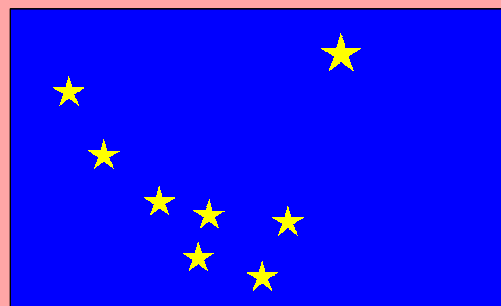
John Bell (Benny) Benson designed Alaska's flag when he was 13 years old. An Alaska Native, Benny was born in Chignik in 1913. When he was a seventh grader living at an orphanage in Seward, he responded to a contest sponsored by the American Legion. Benny's eight stars of gold on a field of blue won him a gold watch engraved with the flag he designed. He also won a \$1,000 trip to Washington D.C. to present the flag to President Coolidge. Benny was never able to collect the trip to Washington but his flag was adopted by the Territorial Legislature as Alaska's official flag in May 1927. In 1959 when Alaska became the 49th state, Benny's flag, which features the big dipper and the north star, became our official state flag.

Benny's design inspired Marie Drake, a long-time employee of the Alaska Department of Education, to write a poem in 1935 called Alaska's Flag. The poem was set to music composed by Elinor Dusenbury. The Territorial Legislature adopted the Alaska Flag Song as the official song of the Territory of Alaska in 1955 and it was adopted by the State in 1959.

Over the years, the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood were encouraging the addition of a second verse of the song to recognize Alaska Natives. In 1986, then State Representative Fran Ulmer sponsored House Bill 117, which would have adopted a second verse written by Carol Beery Davis, an Alaska Poet Laureate from 1967-69 and friend of Marie Drake. The verse passed the House but stalled in the Senate.

### ALASKA'S STATE SEAL HISTORY

The State Seal was originally designed in 1910. The rays above the mountains represent the Northern Lights. The smelter symbolizes mining. The train stands for Alaska's railroads, and ships denote transportation by sea. The trees symbolize Alaska's forests, and the farmer, his horse, and the three shocks of wheat represent Alaska's agriculture. The fish and the seals signify the importance of fishing and wildlife to Alaska's economy. Absent is any recognition of Alaska's first people. Please join the Tolerance Commission in urging legislation to create a statewide contest to come up with a design for a new seal that includes recognition of Alaska's indigenous people.



### ALASKA'S FLAG SONG -- SING BOTH VERSES!

#### *1st Verse:*

Eight stars of gold on a field of blue,  
Alaska's Flag, may it mean to you  
The blue of the sea, the evening sky,  
The mountain lakes and the flow'rs nearby,

The gold of the early sourdough dreams,  
The precious gold of the hills and streams,  
The brilliant stars in the northern sky,  
The Bear, the Dipper, and shining high,

The great North star with its steady light.  
O'er land and sea a beacon bright,  
Alaska's Flag to Alaskans dear,  
The simple flag of a last frontier.

#### *Second Verse:*

A Native lad chose the dipper's stars  
For Alaska's flag that there be no bars  
Among our culture. Let it be known  
Through years, the Natives past has grown

To share life's treasures hand in hand  
To keep Alaska our great land  
We love the northern midnight sky  
The mountains, lakes and streams nearby

The great north star with its steady light  
Will guide all cultures clear and bright  
With nature's flag of Alaskans dear  
The simple flag of the last frontier.



## SPEAK UP

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. HOLD A UNITY RALLY OR PARADE. BUY AN AD. GET INVOLVED. WORK TO EDUCATE OTHERS ABOUT THE EVILS OF INTOLERANCE. RECRUIT MORE GOOD MINDS.

AN INFORMED COMMUNITY IS THE BEST DEFENSE AGAINST HATE. You can spread tolerance through church bulletins, door-to-door flyers, Web sites, local cable TV bulletin boards, letters to the editor and print advertisements. Hate shrivels under strong light.

■ Juneau Jewish Community President Chava Lee thought for a long time that “not making waves” was the right thing to do for her family. In 1995 her attitude changed. *“Someone I knew filed a Human Rights Commission complaint against their employer. When questioned, the employer said he wished that Hitler would have finished his job, because if he had, he wouldn’t have to deal with the worker’s complaint.”* According to Chava, the investigator determined there was no human rights violation because the words he used were in jest. Now Chava says, *“Education is the key. We are survivors. Not speaking out allows another group to overwhelm us. We will fight back.”* The Juneau Jewish community is now active in bringing up speakers and organizing events to educate Alaskans about the harmful effects of racial slurs and stereotyping.

■ Tolerance Commission member Thelma Garcia Buchholdt broke barriers when she was elected as the first Filipino American to a state legislature outside of Hawaii. Elected first to the Alaska Legislature in 1974, Thelma was reelected three times. She has been an outspoken advocate for culture and diversity, including women and whalers. As a member of the Finance Committee she secured funding for the Alaska Commission on the Status of Women to publish the first book on the achievements of Alaska’s women. She funded research of the bowhead whale population, allowing Alaska’s Eskimos to maintain their subsistence right to hunt this species of whale for food. She also founded and secured funding for the Asian Alaskan Cultural Center, which now serves the cultural and education needs of Anchorage’s Filipino, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, East Indian, Laotian and Thai communities as well as non-Asian Alaskans. Thelma’s many achievements were featured in the October 2001 national magazine “Filipinas.”

■ Rev. William Greene is the Chair of the Minority Community Police Relations Task Force, which was formed in 1981 after members of the Anchorage African American community demanded an investigation into the shooting death by police of an African American man. He works closely with the Anchorage Equal Rights Commission, FBI, US Attorney’s office, and others to act as a catalyst between the community and law enforcement agencies. His group was the first to hold hearings after the paint-ball shooting to look at racism in the city as a whole. *“There is a lot of racism in this city,”* he told the Tolerance Commission at the July 28 hearing in Anchorage. The Task force



*Pastor William Greene  
of the Eagle River Missionary Baptist Church*

doesn’t have enforcement but it is helpful for mediation. *“Just having the Anchorage Police Department working with people of color has been good for educational purposes. People are getting tired of having forums and having nothing come out of it. Suggestions? ‘We should welcome all forms of people,’ said Rev. Greene, ‘but we don’t have to welcome the racism. Make it known that racism won’t be tolerated.’”*

### TO PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND THE MEDIA

Take hate crimes seriously and display them prominently. But be careful what you say. Betsy Arbelovsky of Kenai wrote to the Commission with her observances of the media after the paint-ball incident. *“One major TV station and a newspaper ran*

editorials against the behavior, but stated over and over again that the victims were "drunk" or "inebriated." I called and spoke to the editors, because the victims had not been all identified, and asked them how they knew they were all drunk? The perpetrators of the violence were racist, and the media used thinking errors to justify the violent behavior of the young white shooters.

"They grouped the folks they wanted to terrorize into a category, but that didn't mean the category was accurate. Not even a trained law enforcement officer can tell if someone is drunk while driving past them, they might be walking on a slick sidewalk, have a medical issue, etc. The media prefaced descriptions of the offenders as "alleged," but carelessly added derogatory labels to the victims. I wondered how many other victims would feel comfortable coming forward after the press described them in that manner."

## POSITIVE ROLE MODELS OVERCOME STEREOTYPES: SPEAK UP FOR DIVERSITY

Juneau Police Officer Ben Coronell has been so successful recruiting more minorities and women to the force, and acting as a positive role model, his supporters won't allow him to retire. He came to the Juneau Tolerance Commission meeting just to listen, but "after giving it much thought and consideration, I thought if I remained silent I would be condoning unjust or unfair acts happening around me." Coronell started his career in 1979 with a threat from another officer to "stay the hell out."

"The Juneau Police Department had a terrible reputation during this particular era and was not trusted by the Native community. I really do not blame the police officers because they would drive around the same six blocks in the downtown area and see Natives in a negative light. They would think all they do is drink. They lumped all the Natives together in their minds, thinking there are no Native professionals out there. From the time I had started, they (officers) had side bets I would not last a month.

The Department has come a long way since then. I think it could always be better. But there is no doubt in my mind that the very same people that did unpleasant things to me would jump in front of a bullet for me today, and they know I would do the same for them. Currently we have a dozen (diverse) officers in the Juneau Police Department: Four Alaska Natives, one African American, one Hispanic, one Puerto Rican, three females, one down south Native American, and one Filipino Officer. I have actively recruited for minorities and females for as long as I have been employed here at the Department, for over 22 years. I could retire but feel my work is not done."

## A "FRANCISCAN BLESSING"

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half truths and superficial relationships, so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may work for justice, freedom and peace.

May God bless you with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejections, starvation, and war, so that you may reach out your hand to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless you with enough foolishness to believe you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.

-- Submitted by Rev. Chuck Eddy, Tolerance Commission Chair

# I Want the Freedom

I want the freedom to speak  
My language and to tell my own story

Free to keep and bear the arms of  
oral traditions for the seventh generation

I want the freedom to  
Be secure in my Native person

Free from the silence of murder,  
Rape, suicide and alcoholic arrest

I want the freedom to  
Be secure in my tribal house

Free from spiritual violations -  
Appropriation, and cultural desecration

I want the healing freedom of  
Justice, Access to due process

Free of the double jeopardy  
Of being an exploited unwanted

I want the freedom to speak of  
Living and fishing on traditional-use land

Without the fear of  
Retaliation, relocation, or unjust citation

I want the freedom of  
Liberty, equality, and tribal intellectual property

Free from ignorant ridicule,  
Classroom shame and image misrepresentation

I want the freedom to  
Exchange ideas, holding the search for truth as self-evident

Free of intellectual and spiritual servitude  
Educational hegemony and hateful thought control

I want the freedom to  
Live in our great America as a free Indigenous person

As a sovereign man, woman or child  
Free in my spirit, my life, my voice

©March 2001 By Diane E. Benson

Benson is a Tlingit Indian, from the Takdeintaan Clan and Snail House of Sitka. She is a poet, playwright, stage actor and director living in Chugiak. Her work appears in numerous anthologies and literary journals, including a book of poetry she co-edited and promoted in England. She currently tours nationally and locally with, "My Spirit Raised Its Hands," a play she wrote about Alaskan civil rights activist Elizabeth Peratrovich.



## LOBBY LEADERS

PERSUADE POLITICAL, BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS TO TAKE A STAND AGAINST HATE CRIMES AND OTHER ISSUES THAT DIVIDE US. A QUICK RESPONSE CREATES A POSITIVE REPUTATION FOR THE COMMUNITY.

THE FIGHT AGAINST HATE AND INTOLERANCE needs community leaders willing to take a stand. The governor, mayor, legislator, police chief, college president, school principal, corporate CEO: key people can quickly turn a negative event into a positive community experience. They can muster support. They are quoted in the news. They set the tone, direction and good example. Alaska has both positive and negative examples of leadership on a variety of different issues, but sometimes individual leadership isn't enough.

An Anchorage Daily News editorial this year featured Fairbanks historian Terrence M. Cole's essay, "Jim Crow in Alaska," to remind us of Alaska's history of segregation and discrimination. Cole concludes "even to this day, many Alaskans have blind spots on the subject of race discrimination toward Alaska Natives."

Mr. Cole's essay noted that many Alaskans think Alaska's record on race is better than the rest of the country. In some cases, they're right. The Territorial Legislature outlawed discrimination in 1945, a generation before the U.S. Congress did. Women in Alaska won the right to vote before women in the rest of the country. But you need only look at the lack of action taken on a number of issues in the Alaska Legislature to know that a lot more needs to be done.

Alaska Federation of Natives President Julie Kitka used the "blind spot" theory in her testimony this summer to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, in describing the climate of intolerance toward Alaska Natives. She highlighted the distribution of racist fliers placed on Anchorage cars during a town meeting on racism after the paint-ball incident, unresolved rapes and murders of Alaska Native women, overwhelming passage of an "English-only" initiative, legislative school funding packages that treat rural kids differently, and more. One of the most fundamental dangers, she says, to the survival of Native peoples, is the decade-long political attack on the traditional hunting and fishing rights of Native Villages -- the right of subsistence.

### SUPPORT SUBSISTENCE

For more than 10,000 years, Alaska Natives have fed, clothed and housed their families by hunting, fishing and gathering from the lands and waters of Alaska. Subsistence remains a physical, cultural and economic necessity for the survival of Alaska's Native villages. Alaska business leaders and politicians and, according to polls, most Alaskans agree. From Governor Knowles to Commonwealth North to the Alaska Humanities Forum to the Alaska Commission on Rural Governance to Chambers of Commerce, all support subsistence.



### SUPPORT HATE CRIME LAWS

Hotly contested and flawed by reporting inaccuracies, hate crime laws serve an important purpose. They alert us to tension and hatred between groups of people. A hate crime against an individual is also an attack on a class of citizens, a "message crime" intended to terrorize everyone in the class. Hate crimes threaten a community's health. They can trigger civil unrest and raise tensions between groups or between victims and authorities. Because of the great danger they pose, hate crimes warrant aggravated penalties. Hate victims are not asking for special rights, only for the freedom to live daily lives without fear. Governor Tony Knowles and Senator Georgianna Lincoln, D-Rampart, have hate crime legislation now pending in the Alaska Legislature.

### WE RECOMMEND:

- Register to vote and vote for leaders who care about human rights.
- Write a letter to the editor on human rights issues.

■ Follow the action or inaction of political leaders during the Alaska Legislative Session, which runs every year from January to May in Juneau. Look in your local phone book for the phone number of a Legislative Information Office near you. Call and email your legislators.

## TOLERANCE ON THE JOB

The workplace in Alaska is an untapped resource for promoting tolerance. Adults of all sexes, races, religions and ethnicities mix for long hours in pursuit of a common goal. We urge owners, CEOs and managers to turn this force loose to help create a more tolerant Alaska that celebrates our diversity of people and cultures.

■ Deb Seaton and George Gee of Anchorage's Side Street Espresso trade food for work from homeless Alaskans. They also hire people with special needs and hold events at their cafe to benefit a variety of human rights causes.

■ Alyeska Pipeline Service Company provides cross-cultural training for its employees (see description at right).

■ Al Bramstedt of KTUU Television produced and aired television spots featuring Alaska Natives and others to dispel stereotypes and celebrate what we have in common as Alaskans.

## LESSONS TO LEARN: IDAHO'S IMAGE

People laughed when a former aerospace engineer named Richard Butler bought 20 acres in Hayden Lake, Idaho, in the 1970s, and announced plans for an "Aryan Nation." His marches and diatribes were carried in the news, but they seemed preposterous and he was dismissed as another kook in the woods.

Looking back, it is easy to follow the escalation from words to deeds, from demagoguery to crimes: A gathering of neo-Nazis. A swastika scrawled on a Jewish-owned restaurant. A threat to biracial children. Racist fliers distributed to neighbors. Firebombing of the home of a Coeur d'Alene priest. Bank robberies. Explosions in a federal building and an abortion clinic. More than 100 human rights groups have formed in Idaho to fight this activity. But tolerance leaders say hate is entrenched and shows no sign of stopping.

Hewlett Packard is one business that has suffered from Idaho's hate image. According to Cindy Stanphill, the company's diversity and staffing manager, when HP tries to recruit workers, they ask about the Aryan Nations. "And it's not just people of color. People tell us, if the State allows that to go on, that's not where I want my kids raised, in a State where hate is allowed to have a voice." As a result, she says, HP loses many good people. Attrition rates for people of color are double the national average.

# BUSINESS STRATEGIES

The Internet economy and the ability to "go global" gives new meaning to workplace diversification. Many companies' success stories lie in the ability to reach a worldwide market, by communicating in a language we can all understand -- decency and respect. Alyeska Pipeline Service Company is an excellent example of employees and management working together.

*"I wanted to share what a few companies in the community have been doing. For the last two years Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., and recently BP Amoco have been sponsoring the Healing Racism dialog sessions. This is part of the work of the Healing Racism in Anchorage, a non-profit which has been holding these sessions in Anchorage over the last ten years. (I am a founding member of this organization.)*

*These sessions for Alyeska have been incredibly powerful. Our company environment is multicultural and our leaders are learning the skills to manage within this environment. The sessions are nine to twelve weeks in length for two hours each week. They include topics and readings from the book, "Healing Racism in America" by Nathan Rutstein. We have followed his model and had much success with it. The sessions I facilitate at Alyeska have included a majority of our senior executives and their direct reports and other staff members. The interest in continuing these sessions throughout the entire company has been overwhelming.*

*Mr. Rutstein's approach includes discussions on: Defining prejudice and racism; unaware racism - how we've all been infected; internalized racism - when the anger, hurt and frustration turn inward; stereotypes and how they affect us; Ally-building as a way to heal racism - an individual commitment, to name a few of the topics.*

**-- Mary C. Price has been with Alyeska for 21 years. She also serves as Alyeska's Organization and Development Advisor to Corporate Headquarters. She is one of the founders of Healing Racism in Anchorage.**

*"I am a Vice President of Alyeska Pipeline Service Company and active in the United Way of Anchorage and the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce, where I currently serve as Board Chairman. My statement today is personal and not on behalf of these organizations.*

*"...I would like to mention Mary Price. I must be truthful and enthusiastic about her contributions to me and to Alyeska. Mary is one of the most courageous people I know. She persuaded our company that we need to openly talk about racism in our workforce and in our society. It took her over a year just to persuade us to try it. Once we agreed to experiment with her idea, she has used Healing Racism as a vehicle to get people to examine our differences and our racist attitudes. As a direct result of this process, many of our executives and managers have made fundamental transformational changes in themselves. They have become advocates for inclusion. That is certainly true for me. ...I now realize that I have an important obligation as a citizen of Alaska and the United States to help us remove racism from our society and create an inclusive open society."*

**-- Testimony of Robert I. Shoaf, Vice President, Alyeska Pipeline, September 28, 2001**

## LOOK LONG RANGE

**CREATE A "BIAS RESPONSE" TEAM. HOLD ANNUAL EVENTS, SUCH AS A PARADE OR CULTURE FAIR, TO CELEBRATE YOUR COMMUNITY'S DIVERSITY AND HARMONY. PROMOTE SOMETHING THE COMMUNITY NEEDS.**

THE BEST BARRIER TO HATE IS A TOLERANT COMMUNITY. The Tolerance Commission was a useful six-month task force, but more work needs to be done. We recommend the creation of a similar, long-term, ongoing citizen commission. A small group of committed people can build a moral barrier to discrimination, or at least create an atmosphere in which hate outbreaks are rare.

Experts say the first step in changing hearts is to change behavior. By acting tolerant, people begin to respect one another. Begin with positive statements and symbolic gestures. Make tolerance a habit, an activity as normal as your kids' soccer practice.

### VIGILS AND GOOD FOOD

- Hold candlelight vigils, religious services and other activities to bring people of different races, religions and ethnic groups together. In Juneau, the celebration of Elizabeth Peratrovich Day, on February 16, is an annual event to remember one of Alaska's first civil rights leaders. This year, Gov. Knowles will kick off the new year declaring January as Tolerance Month, so every day of every new year will bring us closer to a more tolerant Alaska that celebrates our diversity of people and cultures.

- Take every opportunity to celebrate diversity. Cinco de Mayo is a celebration of Mexican culture.

- Break bread together. Bridge Builders of Anchorage started out as a multi-cultural dinner date. Now it's a non-profit working for positive change. The idea is to get people of different cultures together to do something we all love to do -- eat and talk.

- Move from prayer to action. The United Methodist Women of Alaska created a Racial Justice subcommittee where they give out annual awards to Alaska citizens who demonstrate amazing acts in the field of social justice. Diane and Rev. Yuho VanParijs run the White Lotus temple in Anchorage and Diane is the president of the Interfaith Council of Alaska -- a coalition of different faiths working together.

- Continue a community discussion on discrimination and race. The Tolerance Commission is effective because it allows individuals to tell their



*Leo Glad, right, dances with Yolanda Cortez. Both are members of the dance group Aguila Azteca which performed at the Bridge Builders annual potlatch at the Alaska Native Heritage Center in Anchorage in July.*

stories, their immigration history, their daily encounters with discrimination and their fear about revealing sexual orientation. It's not an investigative agency like the Human Rights Commission.

- Consider building something the community needs, from Habitat for Humanity housing to a new park. This year kids from Tyson Elementary, the Mountain View Boys and Girls Clubs and others worked together to build a community garden in Anchorage's Mountain View neighborhood. Chugach Alaska Corporation places interpretive signage along the highway to remind Alaskans about the history of the people who lived on this land 10,000 years ago.

- Visit a tolerance website. The Tolerance Commission website contains written, audio and video testimony from its six months of public hearings in Alaska at <http://www.gov.state.ak.us/tolerance/>. Teaching Tolerance has a website at [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org).

- Organize cultural awareness around an official month. There are many nationally-recognized months dedicated to cultural and ethnic heritage. February is Black History Month, March is National Women's History Month, May is Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, May is also Older Americans Month, June is Gay and Lesbian Pride Month, September 15 to October 15 is Hispanic Heritage Month, October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month and Filipino American History Month and November is Alaska Native/American Indian Heritage Month.



## ALASKA'S LAWS SHOULD PROTECT ALL ALASKANS, INCLUDING GAYS AND LESBIANS

As of 2001, only 13 states prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation. Alaska is not one of those states. Some people oppose protection of gays and lesbians in civil rights legislation and refuse to join tolerance coalitions if gays are included. Like other victims of hate crimes, gays and lesbians are the target of jokes, harassment and physical harm because of who they are. Demonizing them, as a handful of vocal, conservative church leaders do, creates a field of bias in which more harmful attacks are inevitable. The Tolerance Commission recommends amending Alaska's statutes, regulations, policies, and executive or administrative orders so that persons may not be discriminated against based on sexual orientation.

## HATE NEXT DOOR

"...I would like to share with you one recent example of intolerance in my community of Haines. Although I believe that relatively few people in this area personally demonstrate a significant level of intolerance, the issue remains a longstanding problem because of the unwillingness of the community as a whole to squarely address the issue.

"Shortly after the cruise ship company Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd. was found guilty of 21 felony convictions for dumping hazardous waste into the waters near our town, a group of residents felt compelled to communicate their outrage over the company's actions, and to demonstrate their concern for the future health of our local waters and fisheries. A parade float was built for the S.E. Alaska State Fair parade that resembled a cruise ship, "discharging" a mock wastestream of polluted water onto the street. The float was quite well received, greeted mostly by laughter and cheers from onlookers.

"Unfortunately, two men who have regularly and openly displayed animosity towards anyone publicly advocating a pro-conservation ethic decided to rain on the parade. They waited for the float to finish the parade route, and armed with crates of tomatoes, opened fire at close range. I was inside the float and was unaware of what was happening aside from the obvious pounding we were receiving from some type of thrown objects. My 14-year old daughter was on the "deck" on top of the float, acting the part of a cruise ship tourist. According to witnesses, the two middle-aged men began targeting my daughter and the man with her on the van roof. She was struck numerous times, and was hit directly in the face. It was extremely fortunate that she was not knocked from the top of the slow-moving vehicle, since the driver was attempting to control the van while being struck from only a few feet away by tomatoes thrown with all the force the attackers could bring to bear.

"...It took six months for the matter to be settled, and in the end (I was told to save costs) the State accepted a guilty plea bargain from the attackers of one misdemeanor count of reckless endangerment.

"...The attackers were given no jail time, and no fines. They were required to undergo an anger-management evaluation that

## COMBAT HATE GROUPS

According to Brian Goldberg, the Pacific Northwest Regional Director of the national Anti-Defamation League, hate groups are spreading across Alaska. While the membership is still low, currently there are four organized groups here, including the National Alliance, the World Church of the Creator, Christian Identity and Aryan Nations. There is a growing Patriot/Militia movement.

Alaskans must continue to speak out against these groups so they won't feel welcome here. Encourage law enforcement officials to track and monitor these activities.

resulted in no action by the State, because they simply told the evaluator they did not have an anger management problem. The men were required to perform 40 hours of community service. One of the men fulfilled his community service sentence at the local American Legion Hall (a private club).

"...I predicted that the absence of any meaningful punishment would strengthen the belief that future belligerent actions would be similarly tolerated. Unfortunately, my prophecy has come to pass. In the past year there have been numerous incidents of slander, libel, and public intimidation. Citizens expressing pro-conservation viewpoints have been publicly labeled as "eco-terrorists" and "enviro-Nazis" in an attempt to (1.) eliminate legitimate debate on issues, and (2.) isolate the conservation community from the rest of town. Many people are understandably reticent to be identified as sympathetic to "Nazis and terrorists." As a person who had family members murdered at Auschwitz, I am particularly offended by such remarks. Of course the accusations couldn't be more hypocritical -- the real fascists in Haines are those that wrap themselves in the American flag while denying others the right of free speech.

"I do not believe that significant changes in human behavior come easily or quickly. But as long as our judicial, political, and enforcement systems continue to tolerate antisocial behavior against women, children, minorities, or anyone who simply dances to a different drum, no progress will be made. Clearly, it is easiest to blame the perpetrators of these acts, and to a lesser degree the government's tacit support of their anti-social behavior. But in the end, much of the responsibility must lie with the community as a whole: the general public tolerates intolerance. Too many Alaskans choose to remain uninvolved until they or their loved ones are personally attacked. Until we all accept our broader responsibility to work towards preventing the abuse of any individual's civil liberties, we are all responsible for preventing the evolution of any long-term solution."

Testimony of Gershon Cohen, Ph.D., Haines

## TEACH TOLERANCE

**BIAS IS LEARNED EARLY, USUALLY AT HOME. BUT CHILDREN, PARENTS AND EDUCATORS CAN BE INFLUENCED BY SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND CURRICULA. SPEND TIME WITH AND MENTOR LOCAL YOUTH.**

BIAS IS LEARNED IN CHILDHOOD. By the age of three, children are aware of racial differences and may have the perception that “white” is desirable. By the age of 12, they hold stereotypes about numerous ethnic, racial and religious groups, according to the Leadership Conference Education Fund, [www.civilrights.org](http://www.civilrights.org). Because stereotypes underlie hate, and half of all hate crimes in the U.S. are committed by young men under 20, tolerance education is critical.

About 10 percent of hate crimes occur in schools and colleges, but schools can also be an ideal environment to counter bias. Schools mix youths of different backgrounds, place them on equal footings and allow one-on-one interaction. Children are also naturally curious about people who are different.

Diversity education should begin at home, continue to preschool, K-12, college, and on through life. The Tolerance Commission heard this suggestion throughout the public hearings. We recommend cross-cultural training for everyone, but particularly for all people who work with kids. The more training, the better. Today, teachers must take a cross-cultural course within three years of being hired in a rural community. There is no cultural training required *before* teachers move to rural Alaska and there is little support for them once they arrive. This can be foreign for the teacher and difficult for the students learning from that teacher. More bilingual education and training is needed in urban Alaska schools, where Alaska Native and immigrant populations are increasing. Shirley Holloway, the Commissioner of Alaska’s Department of Education and Early Development, encourages Alaskans to get more involved in their publicly elected school boards, which have the authority to develop a cross-cultural curriculum and require a more comprehensive effort to recruit and retain minority teachers. All kids benefit from a diverse pool of educators. The Alaska Native Knowledge Network, The Association of Alaska School Boards and the Department of Health and Social Services and others have come up with standards and guidelines for nurturing and building in students the rich and varied cultural traditions that continue to be



**KOTZEBUE CUTIES** greet the Tolerance Commission at the Nikaitchuat Ilisagvait (Inupiaq Immersion School) in Kotzebue. Pictured from left are Igluguk, Qignak, Agnik, Panitchiaq, Kunuyak, and the little one in back is Qaulluq. In addition to their regular classroom instruction, these children learn their traditional language and culture.

practiced in communities throughout Alaska. The University of Alaska offers a free online learning tool and CD-ROM for teachers, librarians, and parents, called Litsite Alaska (<http://litsite.alaska.edu/uaa>). Dr. Dan Etulain of Sitka is training high school students on video production with a goal of creating an Alaska Community Network, airing programs produced by Alaskans for Alaskans. Carol Anderson of the Millenials Forum Project uses video to build self-esteem and promote ethical and responsible patterns of behavior in youth. Good things are happening, but more needs to be done.

### CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES FOR PROMOTING TOLERANCE

- Acknowledge differences among students and celebrate the uniqueness of every one. Anchorage School District Superintendent Carol Comeau knows the challenges of this task, with approximately 50,000 students speaking 86 different languages and with thousands of students requiring extra attention for their special needs. Kids with disabilities are now brought into the regular classroom, so they have the opportunity to interact and be educated alongside their non-disabled peers to the best extent possible.

- Promote inclusion and fairness, but allow discussions of all feelings, including bias learned at home and the street.

■ Use sports to bridge racial gaps. Anchorage high school athletes Trajan Langdon, now the Cleveland Cavaliers, and Scotty Gomez gives pep talks to kids and is a positive role-model for children of all colors.

■ Promote diversity by letting children tell stories about their families, however different they may be. Diversity embraces not just race, but age, religion, marital status and personal ability. Remember that charting “family trees” can be a challenge to some children, such as those who are adopted or living with single parents. Tanya Kashevarof and Amy Bristol were 8th grade students at St. George Island School in southwest Alaska when their teacher Norman Milks encouraged them to write to Teaching Tolerance about an overlooked injustice of the internment of Aleut people in Alaska.

■ Teach older children to look critically at stereotypes portrayed by the media. Ask them to close their eyes and imagine a lawyer, doctor, rap musician, gang member, bank president, hair stylist or criminal. What did they “see” and why? Confronted with their own stereotypes, children begin to question how they’ve been shaped by the media.

■ Teach mediation skills to kids. Some 300,000 high school students are physically attacked every month, according to the National Institute of Education. One survey of 130 New York City teachers found that after student mediators went to work, incidents of violence and name calling declined dramatically, while cooperation and communication among students increased significantly.

## RESPONDING TO HATE AT SCHOOL

The massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, demonstrated that, left unchecked, hatred can lead to an apocalypse.

Alaska had its own wake-up call on February 19, 1997, when a Bethel High School student brought a gun to school and murdered a fellow student and the principal. The Tolerance Commission hearing in Bethel was filled with emotional memories from that day and the community’s positive response. The tragedy brought the Bethel community and all Alaskans together to focus even more attention on our kids. Lower Kuskokwim School District Superintendent Bill Ferguson runs an aggressive anti-harrassment program in this large rural School District with 24 villages. Bethel is also a leader in cultural programs, incorporating Elders into the classroom to teach traditional ways. Yupik is the first language for many of the 3,700 students and the district has the longest-running public Native language and immersion school -- Ayaprunelitnaurvik.

All across the state, school districts are recognizing that creating a supportive school climate with a strict response to intimidation, hostility and bias is critical. In the schools it’s not just White vs. Native or White vs. Black, it’s also “Cool” vs. “Geek,” and so much more. Here are some winning strategies from *Responding to Hate at School*, published by Teaching Tolerance:

■ Create an unwelcome environment for hate speech and symbols. Left unchecked, epithets, physical intimidation and hate graffiti create a toxic environment. Take a stand against hate literature,

music, websites and e-mail. Designate one staff member to monitor hate websites.

■ Speak up when bigotry comes from colleagues. We all harbor stereotypes, but, left unchallenged, teachers can easily transmit theirs to students and be insensitive to bias in schools.

■ If a hate emergency occurs, focus on safety first. Take rumors of violence and bias incidents seriously. Set up a police liaison ahead of time. Set up a tip line or e-mail box for hate events and rumors.

■ Support victims of harassment. Surround them with an atmosphere of protection and, if they wish, help from fellow students. Identify teachers or counselors as “safe contacts” for every type of bias event. Declare schools “hate-free zones.”

## UNIVERSITY SUGGESTIONS

As small communities in themselves, college campuses should adopt the recommendations in this guide for their use. Racial tensions should be aired, victims supported and hate crimes denounced by administrators. University officials should recruit and retain more minority professors. By practicing and teaching diversity, colleges influence attitudes and behavior in the leaders of the future.

## FOUR STEPS FOR PARENTS

- 1 Work with your school board to make sure curricula and textbooks are equitable and multicultural.
- 2 Encourage teachers and administrators to receive ongoing diversity training. Healing Racism in Anchorage and Race and Healing in Fairbanks are two options. Father Michael Oleksa of Koliganek has produced award-winning videos and Ric Iannolino of Juneau also consults on diversity issues. Send your kids to school with tolerance curricula, such as the free teaching tools available at [www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org).
- 3 Encourage your children to become tolerance activists. They can build multicultural peace gardens, like the one in Anchorage’s Mountain View neighborhood, to interact with children of other cultures. Apply for the Alaska Humanities’ Forum Rural/Urban Exchange Program. Call 272-5341 for more information.
- 4 Hate groups target youth on the internet. Watch where your children are surfing. Discuss the problem of hate sites openly, as you would the dangers of illegal drugs.



## DIG DEEPER

LOOK INTO ISSUES THAT DIVIDE US: ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY, INSTITUTIONAL DISCRIMINATION, AND EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL.

SOONER OR LATER, ANY TOLERANCE EFFORT bumps up against issues that will take more than a neighborhood to solve. In any city or state there are dozens of problems to address: hunger, affordable housing, elderly isolation, the special needs of people who experience disabilities, school dropout rates, domestic violence, etc.

The devastating events of September 11, 2001 lend a sharper focus to combatting bigotry. The tragic loss of thousands of lives marks a crescendo in the wretched path of intolerance. Hate kills. At no other time in our history as a nation was this more true than on September 11. Alaska is not immune from the ravaging effects of prejudice. We suffer as a community when we fear those who are different from us.

Architectural discrimination -- intolerance in our institutions and our systems -- may be attacked through our laws. Attitudinal discrimination -- intolerance in our hearts -- can only be erased through time, through education, and through personal conviction, understanding that by protecting those who are different, we protect ourselves.

The suggestions offered in this Community Action Guide are steps each of us as individuals can take toward building a society that celebrates diversity. These are just steps in an evolutionary process that will take patience and the profound belief that our only choice is to stay the course toward a world that conquers its differences and problems through communication and compassion.

The Tolerance Commission report, which accompanies this action guide, is geared towards policy makers who guide the future of our state. The report focuses on four major areas: institutions, education, economic concerns and the judicial system. Each section contains findings and recommendations based on the testimony heard and research conducted. The report is accessible online at <http://www.gov.state.ak.us/tolerance/>.

It is the hope of the Tolerance Commission that our suggestions and recommendations resonate within the hearts and minds of all Alaskans as we strive to make our state a place where we all can live, free from fear, among our neighbors.



**Tolerance Commission members:** Snapshots from left to right are Lieutenant Governor Fran Ulmer, Senator Bettye Davis and Senator Georgianna Lincoln (who lucked out and missed the blurry photo opportunity!) Standing from left to right are Marie Greene, Kelly Brown, Shari Kochman, Rev. Chuck Eddy, Diana Rhoades (Executive Director), Judge Tom Stewart, Father Michael Oleksa and Gilbert Sanchez. Seated from left to right, Representative Mary Kapsner, Mara Kimmel and Thelma Buchholdt.

### CELEBRATE ALASKA'S DIVERSITY

Alaska is a land of contrasts and extremes, including our tremendous diversity of people. The population of Alaska in 2000 was 626,932 people, including 103,000 Alaska Natives — Eskimos, Indians and Aleuts. At almost 17 percent, this is the highest percentage of indigenous people in the United States. A large majority of non-Native people are migrants from the Lower 48 states, along with increasing numbers of Asian and Latin American immigrants. English is spoken by nearly everyone in the state, but 98 other languages are spoken in Alaska, including 20 different Alaska Native languages. We have three major urban areas with 20 smaller towns and 180 villages. The majority of residents in rural Alaska are Alaska Natives who live in villages with populations ranging between 25 and 5,000. The most-recognized conflict in Alaska is the divide between rural and urban (and Native vs. non-Native) Alaskans — particularly when it comes to financing state services. One of the most unrecognized conflicts in Alaska is the discrimination against people based on their sexual orientation.

# FOUR ISSUES TO WORK ON

## INSTITUTIONAL TOLERANCE

Our government should lead by example. All Alaskans deserve access to government institutions, and treatment from those institutions that is respectful, responsive and free from prejudice. Tolerance must begin at the top -- we cannot expect Alaskans to embrace our diversity if our leaders and public agencies do not. Testimony highlighted a recurring flashpoint of institutional intolerance -- the divide between rural and urban Alaskans. Uneven delivery of governmental services, including law enforcement, school maintenance, opportunities for economic development and quality jobs must be a statewide concern. Institutional intolerance allows discrimination to occur on the basis of sexual orientation, and it allows discrimination against people who speak English as a second language. We need to be more aware of the special needs of people who experience disabilities. Alaska's elders suffer from lack of affordable housing and health care. People in poverty spoke of life on the street and the dangers they face every day. Our community must embrace all Alaskans if we are to truly claim we are a tolerant society.

## RESPECTFUL EDUCATION

Education was a primary theme in testimony before the Commission. It was presented, on one hand, as the ultimate cure for an intolerant society. Conversely, it is perceived as a source of intolerance.

Education is multi-faceted -- including what we learn at school, at home, in our community, and in society. Lessons instilled in us at a young age may stay with us the longest. The Commission recognizes that what a child learns at home is a private matter, and can only hope those lessons do not include fear and distrust of those who are different from ourselves.

We must work harder to achieve a school system that respects our various cultures, lifestyles and languages. As students, parents, educators and citizens, we must continue to learn about each other, and about what unites us as Alaskans.

## ECONOMIC EQUALITY

Alaska is a rich state -- yet many Alaskans and communities live in poverty. A number of families cannot fully partake of our rich economic opportunities. When we look at the person, the community, or the state, we find circumstances and obstacles that increase economic intolerance in Alaska. By addressing these areas, we can reverse the growing gap between those who are able to take advantage of Alaska's economic opportunities and those who currently cannot.

## EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL

Over-incarceration of minorities in Alaska's prisons reflects the lack of culturally appropriate services for those entering the justice system. Our prison population does not mirror our general population. Disproportionately small numbers of minorities are on the front lines of the justice system as either law enforcement officers or in leadership positions. This adds to the perception that the justice system suffers from intolerance. A common snapshot of Alaska's criminal justice system would show white prosecutors and defense attorneys arguing to white juries before white judges about minority defendants who were arrested by white police officers.

Fair access to justice in Alaska is also extraordinarily difficult for non-English speakers. Alaska is one of the only states in the nation to not require certified interpreters in criminal proceedings involving non-English speakers.

Those working within the justice system -- in writing laws, administering them and judging them, must look beyond the need to punish. They must recognize the ultimate goal of the justice system is to prevent. Only in prevention of crime will we see real justice served.

# WHAT ABOUT ME?

**TOLERANCE**, fundamentally, is a personal decision. It comes from an attitude that is learnable and embraceable. We each have the power to change our attitude to overcome our ignorance and fears, and to influence our children, our peers and our community. It begins with “me.”

We all grow up with prejudices. It takes effort to see them as clearly as others do. Human rights experts recommend starting with our speech and thought patterns. Am I quick to label “rednecks” or “liberals” or “communists?” Do I tell gay jokes? Am I careless with gender descriptions?

Debra L.W. Jordan does training in Anchorage and she urges caution when asking people to “change.” She says awareness plus knowledge equals a choice, and then you can choose to respect others. In our new web-based global economy, Alaska businesses are realizing the importance of a workforce that reflects the many people their products serve. Mary Price, a founder of the non-profit organization Healing Racism in Anchorage, and who works for Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, was nominated for the BP/YWCA’s statewide women of achievement awards, in part for her work to help people overcome their biases in the workplace.

Here are some questions you might ask yourself to help overcome your internal biases:

How wide is my circle of friends? How diverse is my holiday card list? How integrated is my neighborhood? Why is that? Do I belong to private clubs that exclude? Do I take economic segregation and environmental racism for granted? How often am I in the minority? Do I have the courage to tell a friend not to tell a sexist joke in my presence? How can I go out of my way to know people who appear different?

There are many good books, films and workshops to guide you in self-examination. Reading histories of Alaska Natives, the civil rights movement and other cultures is a good start.

**THE IMPORTANT STEP IS TO BEGIN...**





*September 14, 2001 was an amazing day of unity for Americans. Three days after the terrorist attacks that stunned the world, the presidential call for a National Day of Prayer brought together Alaska Gov. Tony Knowles and a diverse group of religious leaders to lead a noontime ceremony in memory of the victims. In an evening event pictured above, a coalition of non-profit organizations, including the Alaska Public Interest Research Group, the Alaska Action Center, the Nubian Sisterhood, Identity, Inc. and others, united thousands of Alaskans again for a candlelight vigil on the Delaney Park Strip. Similar ceremonies were held around the state and the country.*

# RESOURCES

A COMPILATION OF ORGANIZATIONS AND MATERIALS THAT  
CAN ASSIST YOU IN FIGHTING DISCRIMINATION IN ALASKA

## NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Southern Poverty Law Center  
Intelligence Project  
Teaching Tolerance  
400 Washington Ave.  
Montgomery, AL 36104  
(334) 264-0286  
[www.tolerance.org](http://www.tolerance.org)

Anti-Defamation League  
Brian Goldberg, Pacific Northwest Region  
(206) 448-5349  
[www.adl.org](http://www.adl.org)

American-Arab  
Anti-Discrimination Committee  
4201 Connecticut Ave NW #300  
Washington, DC 20008  
(202) 244-2990  
[www.adc.org](http://www.adc.org)

Asian American Legal Defense  
& Education Fund  
99 Hudson Street, 12-F  
New York, NY 10013-2815  
(212) 966-5932, (212) 966-4303 fax  
E-mail: [info@aaldef.org](mailto:info@aaldef.org)  
[www.aaldef.org](http://www.aaldef.org)

Leadership Conference on Civil Rights  
Leadership Conference Education Fund  
1629 K St. NW, Washington, DC 20012  
[www.civilrights.org](http://www.civilrights.org)

National Association for the  
Advancement of Colored People  
4805 Mt. Hope Drive  
Baltimore, MD 21215  
(410) 358-8900, [www.naacp.org/](http://www.naacp.org/)

Parents, Family and Friends  
of Lesbians and Gays  
1101 14th St. NW, Suite 1030  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 638-4200, [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

Simon Wiesenthal Center  
Museum of Tolerance  
9760 West Pico Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90035  
(310) 553-9036, [www.wiesenthal.com](http://www.wiesenthal.com)

Filipino American National Historical Society  
810 18th, Suite 100  
Seattle, WA 98122  
(206) 322-0203  
[www.fanhs-national.org](http://www.fanhs-national.org)

## ANTI-BIAS AND CROSS- CULTURAL TRAINING, WORKSHOPS & CONFERENCES

Communicating Across Cultures  
Father Michael Oleksa  
6724 East Fourth Ave.  
Anchorage, AK 99504  
(907) 333-9723

Convergence Consulting & Associates  
Ric Iannolino  
PO Box 21892  
Juneau, AK 99802  
(907) 789-2728  
[converge@ptialaska.net](mailto:converge@ptialaska.net)

Healing Racism in Anchorage  
3521 Andree Drive, Unit B  
Anchorage, AK 99517  
(907) 561-3238  
[ppartnow@alaska.net](mailto:ppartnow@alaska.net)

National Coalition Building Institute  
PO Box 22609  
Seattle, WA 98122  
Phone: 206-323-5427  
[NCBIDarlene@aol.com](mailto:NCBIDarlene@aol.com)

Transformations Race and Healing  
Jesse Arrington III and Mae Marsh  
PO Box 74742  
Fairbanks, AK 99707-4742  
(907) 458-8883  
[transfor@alaska.net](mailto:transfor@alaska.net)

YWCA Annual Diversity Conference  
245 W. 5th  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
Call Sharon Richards (907) 274-1572

## EMPLOYMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS

Governor's Tolerance Commission  
[www.gov.state.ak.us/tolerance](http://www.gov.state.ak.us/tolerance)

Alaska Human Rights Commission  
800 A Street, Suite 204  
Anchorage, AK 99501-3669  
Anchorage Area 907-274-4692  
Anchorage Area TTY/TDD 907-276-3177  
Toll-Free Complaint Hot Line 800-478-4692  
TTY/TDD Hot Line 800-478-3177  
[www.gov.state.ak.us/aschr/aschr.htm](http://www.gov.state.ak.us/aschr/aschr.htm)

Americans with Disabilities Act Information  
[www.labor.state.ak.us/ada/home.htm](http://www.labor.state.ak.us/ada/home.htm)

Anchorage Equal Rights Commission  
632 W. 6th Ave, 1st Floor  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
(907) 343-4343  
TDD (907) 343-4894  
[www.muni.org/aerc/index.cfm](http://www.muni.org/aerc/index.cfm)

Juneau Human Rights Commission  
c/o City Clerk  
155 South Seward Street  
Juneau, AK 99801  
(907) 586-5206

Mayor's Kitchen Cabinet on Racism  
[www.muni.org/mayor/KCRacism.cfm](http://www.muni.org/mayor/KCRacism.cfm)

Minority Community Police Relations  
Task Force  
Rev. William Greene, Chairperson  
7310 E. 17th Ave.  
Anchorage, AK 99504  
(907) 694-6142 (work)

Office of Equal Employment Opportunity  
State of Alaska, Office of the Governor  
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1010  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
Phone/TDD: (907) 269-7495  
Toll-Free: (800) 797-7495  
Fax: (907) 269-7497  
[OEEO@gov.state.ak.us](mailto:OEEO@gov.state.ak.us)

State of Alaska Division of Personnel  
Training and Development  
[www.state.ak.us/local/akpages/ADMIN/dop-td/td-home.htm](http://www.state.ak.us/local/akpages/ADMIN/dop-td/td-home.htm)

U.S. Commission on Civil Rights  
Western Regional Office  
300 North Los Angeles St., Suite 2010  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
(213) 894-3437, (213) 894-0508 fax  
[www.usccr.gov](http://www.usccr.gov)

U.S. Department of Justice  
Community Relations Service Regional Office  
915 2nd Ave. Rm 1808  
Seattle, WA 98174  
(206) 220-6700  
[Rosa.M.Melendez@usdoj.gov](mailto:Rosa.M.Melendez@usdoj.gov)

## PUBLICATIONS

*A Handbook for Victims of Crime in Alaska, Final Report of the Alaska Criminal Justice Assessment Commission, the Alaska Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Fairness and Access, and Improving the Court Process for Alaska's Children in Need of Aid*  
Alaska Judicial Council  
1029 West Third Avenue, Suite 201,  
Anchorage, AK 99501. (907) 279-2526.  
[www.ajc.state.ak.us](http://www.ajc.state.ak.us)

*Briefing on Recent Hate Crimes Against Alaska Natives and Other Acts of Discrimination*  
Alaska Federation of Natives  
1577 C Street, Suite 300  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
(907) 274-3611, (907) 276-7989 fax  
[www.nativefederation.org/flash.html](http://www.nativefederation.org/flash.html)

*One in 10: A Profile of Alaska's Lesbian & Gay Community, and Identity Reports: Sexual Orientation Bias in Alaska*  
Identity, Inc. Box 200070, Anchorage, AK 99520

*Talking to Our Children About Racism, Prejudice, and Diversity, and Building One Nation: A Study of What is Being Done Today in Schools, Neighborhoods and the Workplace*  
Leadership Conference Education Fund

1629 K Street, N.W., Suite 1010  
Washington, DC 20006  
[www.civilrights.org](http://www.civilrights.org)

*Protecting Students from Harassment and Hate Crime: A Guide for Schools*  
U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights  
[www.ed.gov/offices](http://www.ed.gov/offices)  
To order copies: (800) USA-LEARN

*100 Questions and Answers about Arab Americans, A Journalists Guide*  
Detroit Free Press  
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1301 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
(202) 626-3000, [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org)

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Alaska Native Knowledge Network  
University of Alaska Fairbanks, PO Box 756730, Fairbanks, AK 99775-6730

*Blacks in Alaska History Project, Inc.*  
George Harper, historian  
PO Box 143507  
Anchorage, AK 99514  
[www.yukonalaska.com/akblkhist/](http://www.yukonalaska.com/akblkhist/)  
email: [akblkhist@gci.net](mailto:akblkhist@gci.net)  
(907) 333-4719 phone (907) 333-4238 fax

*One America in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Forging a New Future*  
Advisory Board, President's Initiative on Race  
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Superintendent of Documents, Mail Stop:  
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1629 K Street NW, Suite 1010 Washington, DC 20006, (202) 466-3311  
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PO Box 93370  
Anchorage, AK 99509-3370  
[www.akgeo.com/](http://www.akgeo.com/)  
(907) 562-0164 phone, (907) 562-0479

*Helping Kids Succeed—Alaskan Style*  
The Association of Alaska School Boards and Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health  
[www.sesa.org/Assets](http://www.sesa.org/Assets)  
Derek Peterson, (907) 586-1083,  
[dpeterson@aasb.org](mailto:dpeterson@aasb.org) or Becky Judd  
(907) 269-3425, [bjudd-h@ak.net](mailto:bjudd-h@ak.net)

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919 18th St. N.W., Suite 800  
Washington, DC 20006  
(202) 628-4160  
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For more information: Center for Indian Education, College of Education, Arizona State University, PO Box 871311  
Tempe, AZ 85287-1311

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Peggy McIntosh  
Wellesley Centers for Women  
106 Central St.  
Wellesley, MA 02481-8259  
(781) 283-2520  
[www.wellesley.edu/WCW](http://www.wellesley.edu/WCW)



# PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

## *Cover*

Kotzebue kids greet the Tolerance Commission in Kotzebue / Diana Rhoades / 10/9/01

## *Inside Front Cover*

2 year old Damien Derry sits on the side walk at the end of the march against racism. The march, which followed the approximate route taken by the paint ball attackers, ended at the Sheraton Hotel site of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission hearing.  
Bob Halinen / Anchorage Daily News / 8/24/01

## *Page 4*

Katie John and grandson / Bill Hess

## *Page 6*

Members of Bridge Builders unite in a pledge for mutual respect in the Fur Rondy parade in Anchorage / Roberts

## *Page 7*

Arliss Sturgulewski and Katie Hurley lead the Gay Rights Parade in Anchorage / Kirt Beck and Roger Crandy

## *Page 8*

Cindy Pennington of the Alaska Native Women Sexual Assault Committee accepts a national award from U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft/ U.S. Department of Justice

## *Page 9*

Susie Silook was chosen to play "Lolly" in Disney's made-for-TV film Two Against the Arctic / photo courtesy Susie Silook

## *Page 10*

Celebrate Diversity display at Anchorage's Loussac Library / Elaine Hulse

## *Page 11*

Alutiiq Dancer / Kristen Kemmerling, Alaska Division of Tourism

## *Page 12*

Denali / Elaine Hulse

## *Page 14*

Pastor William Greene of the Eagle River Missionary Baptist Church  
Marc Lester / Anchorage Daily News / 8/16/01

## *Page 16*

Marchers participating in the 4th Annual We the People March in downtown Anchorage / Diana Rhoades

## *Page 18*

Leo Glad dances with Yolanda Cortez of the dance group Aguila Azteca / Marc Lester  
Anchorage Daily News / 7/14/01

## *Page 20*

Students at the Nikaitchuat Ilisagvait (Inupiaq Immersion School) in Kotzebue / Diana Rhoades / 10/9/01

## *Page 25*

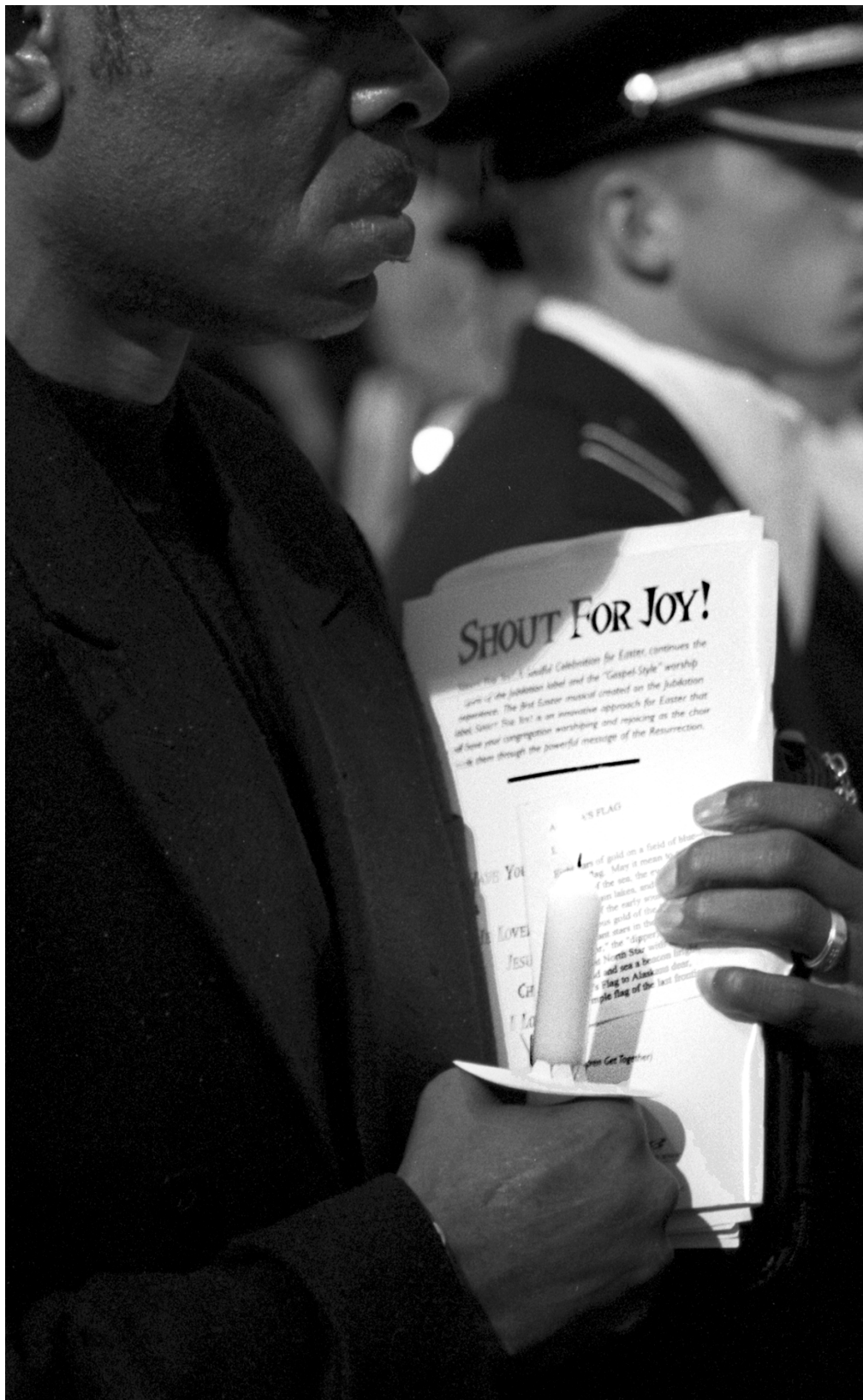
Candlelight vigil in Anchorage for the victims of 9-11 / photo courtesy David Hughes, *The Northern Light* / 9/14/01

## *Inside Back Cover*

UAA Candlelight vigil in Anchorage for the victims of 9-11 / photo courtesy David Hughes, *The Northern Light* / 9/14/01

## *Back Cover*

Friends hold hands at a candlelight vigil on 4th Avenue, downtown Anchorage / Mike Conti / 9/13/01





TOLERANCE, FUNDAMENTALLY,  
IS A PERSONAL DECISION...

Governor's Commission on Tolerance  
2001